California's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

North Coast Project (2009-2011)

What is the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative? The MLPA Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to help the State of California implement the MLPA by using the best readily available science and the advice and assistance of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public.

Why this project? The MLPA, which was signed into law in 1999, directs the state to redesign California's system of marine protected areas to increase its coherence and effectiveness in protecting the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems.

What are marine protected areas? Marine protected areas (MPAs) are named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat. Existing examples of MPAs on the north coast of California include Punta Gorda State Marine Reserve, Point Cabrillo State Marine Conservation Area and Van Damme State Marine Conservation Area.

What can I do in a marine protected area? There are three types of MPAs: state marine reserve, state marine park, and state marine conservation area. Each type has different rules about what activities can or cannot occur within its boundaries. In general, marine reserves do not allow any type of extractive activities (including fishing or kelp harvesting); marine parks do not allow any commercial extraction; and marine conservation areas do not allow some combination of commercial and/or recreational extraction.

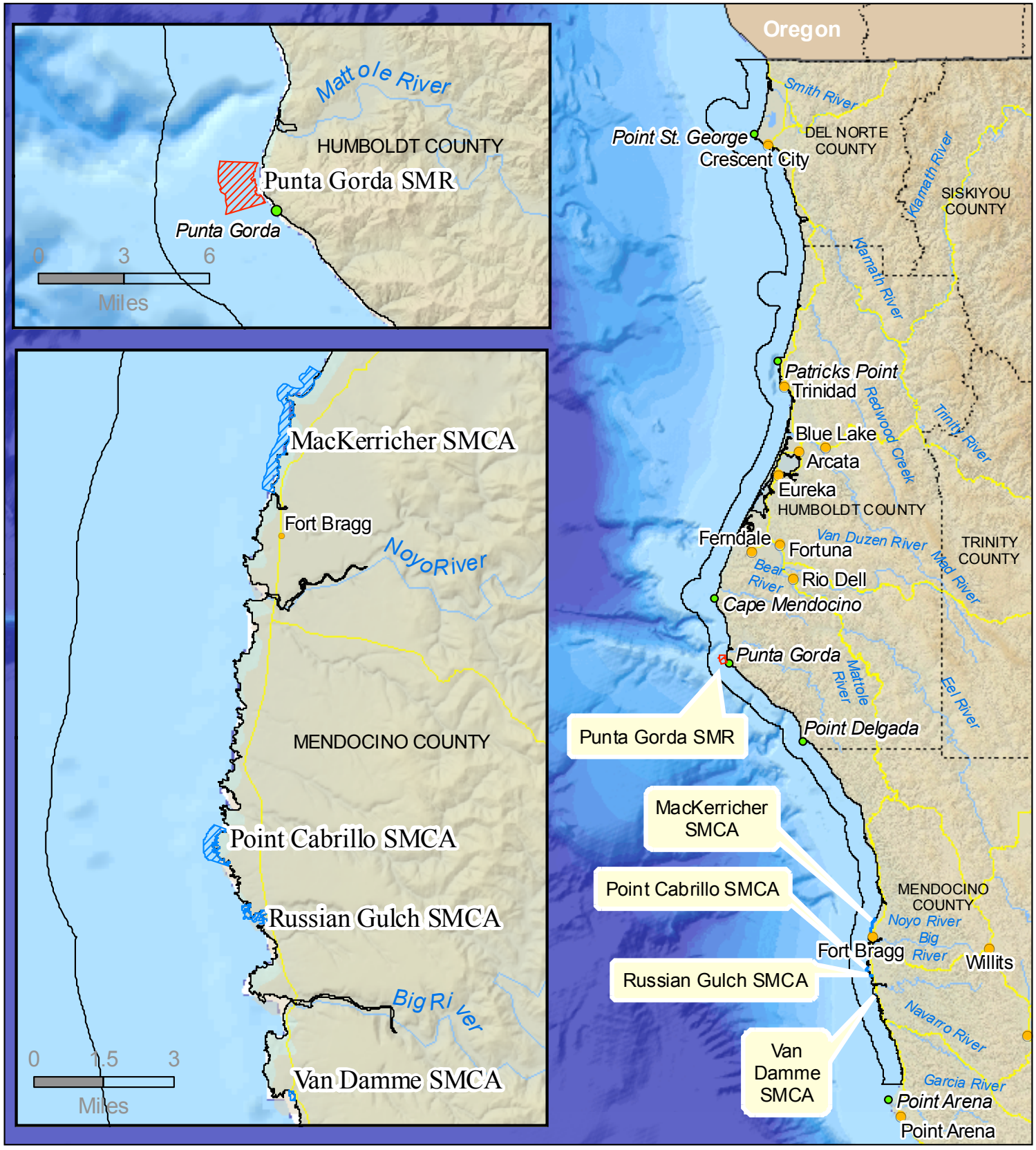
When and where did the MLPA Initiative start? A regional approach is being used to implement the MLPA along California's 1,100-mile coastline. In September of 2007, regulations for the first of the five study regions were implemented for the central coast (Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County). In August of 2009, regulations for the north central coast (Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County, including the Farallon Islands) were adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission and will be implemented in January 2010. Currently, the MLPA planning process is underway in the south coast (Point Conception to the California/Mexico border) and is in the initial planning stages in the north coast (California/Oregon border to Alder Creek near Pigeon Point).

What are the basic steps in the MLPA Initiative process? An appointed, regional stakeholder group makes proposals for MPAs with advice and guidance from other groups and the public; these proposals are reviewed by a science advisory team, and then by a policy level blue ribbon task force that makes recommendations to the California Fish and Game Commission, the decision-making body under the MLPA.

When will the MLPA Initiative be in my area? The MLPA Initiative is just beginning the planning process in the north coast study region. Following the north coast, the MLPA Initiative will focus on San Francisco Bay (Golden Gate Bridge northeast to the Carquinez Bridge).

How do I get involved in the process? The success of the MLPA Initiative is dependent upon the active involvement of stakeholders and the general public in a variety of ways. Opportunities for involvement include participating in a regional stakeholder group, attending workshops and public meetings, and providing input on MPA proposals and supporting documents as they are developed. The MLPA North Coast Project will afford many opportunities for public involvement in the months to come. For more information, visit **www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.**

September 28, 2009



Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

North Coast Study Region
Existing Marine Protected Areas

- Study Region Boundary
- Existing State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA)
- Existing State Marine Reserve (SMR)

0 30 60
Miles

Projection Information:
Name: NAD 1983 California Teale Albers
Projection: Albers
Datum: North American 1983

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North Coast Study Region